

Responsibility in Relationship in Indian Middle Class Family – A Study on Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden*

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As the novel goes on with a flashback Chatterjee relates Burden to responsibility and love. Though Shyamanand and Urmila live in some house, they are not happy with each other. Their relationship was much meaningless and by knowing the relationship of his parents Jamun says to Kasturi.

Kasturi my parents don't exactly bicker and wrangle—they don't chat to each other at all, not like other people, like you and I natter-of the day,... They swap just a handful of phrases per day. "Dinner is ready... Have you signed the cheque for the electricity?... This tea is cold." Beyond the expressions squats the silence. (162)

Many individuals don't realize the importance of relationship and familial peace. Especially in modern world, inter- religious and inter- cultural marriages has serious effect in affecting the harmony within the family. Particularly people within the family will undergo painful emotional state, which result from a tension between opposed and contradictory wishes even in small life events, which can be commonly observed between mother in law and daughter in law as well as between father in law and son in law. (vice versa)

Upamanyu Chatterjee also brings out the relationship between daughter- in – law and mother –in –law in his novel *The Last Burden*. In this novel the relationship between Urmila and Joyce are awful and they both hate each other badly. According to the tradition of India the relationship between mother- in – law and daughter-in-law are rarely good. Because mother shows her right towards his son and the wife shows her right towards his husband.

Thus the love the concern they have towards one another makes them to quarrel and creates a meaningless relationship between mother- in – law and daughter-in-law. And also the parents have the right to dream about the future of their children but the children do what they need and what they like. They never care about the dream of their parents.

Sohail Ahmed a writer says,

"The Last Burden shows parents disgust and disappointment at their sons failing to their expectations and to meet their emotional demands. The troubles and afflictions which parents suffer are hardly realized by children, who crave for their own golden world."

Upamanyu Chatterjee also reveals that how meaningless relationship takes place because of the cultural clash between Hinduism and Christianity. Here as Joyce was a Christian girl she always finds faults in the actions of her father-in law Shyamanand so there occurs a meaningless relationship between Shyamanand and daughter -in –law Joyce. Also Shyamanand doesn't like a Christian girl to be there in his family so there occurs a meaningless relationship between Shyamanand and his son Burfi and also with his daughter -in –law by knowing this Burfi tell to Jamun that,

"More than a decade now, but Baba's still muffed that I married a Christian. What if Joyce'd been muslim? Phew. Jahanara or jaaneman or something. He's gnawed even more by the "Warning Hinduness" of the family" (128)

Although they live in a single family their mind is not set to accept others value, wherein different tradition plays a main role. So, often quarrel arises between them when they face undesirable situation resulting from their opposite persons opinion. Sometimes this disharmony among the family members can create most dangerous and harmful anxiety within themselves that can seriously lead them towards ill health and distress. This type of disgusting relationship will totally block the happiness and wellness of the family which even spoils the present and future livelihood of the forthcoming generations. As Burfi has married a Christian girl his parents are distressed and unhappy.

The reason for the meaningless relationship here is the generation gap that burfi says to Jamun its more than a decade still why does his Baba cares about him of marrying a Christian girl.

Pradeep Trikha states that,

The major impact of the novel emerges from the fact that Chatterjee deals with universal situations and relationships because in a rapidly changing society search for order, alienation, isolation and disintegration effect one and all in a similar fashion.

There are high and low tides in the lives of men which affects them emotionally.(124)

If there is lack of adequate money in a family, it will develop much crisis among them. Financial deficiency could bring big burden to the family. According to Indian tradition, we give much importance to relationships rather than other issues. But even in India, due to financial conflict, many relationships are broken. Even husband and wife, father and son, father and daughter, brothers and sisters etc,.. get into quarrel and lose their trustworthiness for years together. Also division in property may create aggression between the family. Thus financial issues has the power to spoil very close and intimate relationship even between husband and wife, son and father, mother and daughter, etc,.. Many Indian middle class families has lost their happiness because of their lack of money. Also money leads the family members to have misunderstanding between one another. Thus money has much importance in the life of every individual.

Author also brings out the financial need of a Indian-middle class family. In many Indian – middle class family

financial need is one of the main reasons to bring a meaningless relationship among the family members. In this novel *The Last Burden* while Urmila was admitted in hospital they decide to share the bill of her treatment. Shyamanand and the younger son Jamun is ready to share their part to pay the bill but the elder son Burfi was not ready to share his part and here the attitude of Burfi shows that he was not cared about her mother's illness but he feels that he wanted all the money for him and for his wife and children alone..

According to Mohan Ramanam,

The middle – class is suggested, is insensitive, crass and cruel. One is struck by a passage like the following which captures the mood of the whole book: 'But to ignore the weight of cash,' he concedes, 'is damn hard, you know. We ourselves have suffered from not having enough of it. (100)

As Chatterjee relates burden to responsibility in this novel *The last burden* Jamun and Burfi think their responsibilities towards their parents as a burden. Jamun gives twelve thousand rupees to his father Shyamanand for the treatment of her mother and thinks that he is blessed and unburdened.

Upamanyu Chatterjee also brings out the emotional bondages of olden days are different at present earlier the family members will live together but not all the families are not living together because of the meaningless relationship in between the family members. Also many clashes occur in the family because of the generation gap. In this novel *The Last Burden* the elder son Burfi is not ready to adopt the old culture as he is adopted with new culture and he is the worst victim in the family.

C.Sengupta a critic states,

The vicious and tragic nature of this burden is nowhere more apparent than in the relationship between the parents and their two sons, and the elder son's wife. Displaced from Calcutta, their cultural home, the sons Burfi and Jamun, have grown up into westernized, rootless individuals, each in his own way unable to form lasting relationships. Neither are they able to define themselves in terms of their culture or religion.

As C.Sengupta says the separation of parents from children and children from parents also creates a

meaningless relationship between one another. As the children go to other countries they forget the culture and religion of their own but parents always want the children to follow the culture and religion this makes them to have an conflict relationship between one another.

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